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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus

I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) covers developments from 21 November 2011 to 20 June 2012 and brings up to date, since the issuance of my report (S/2011/746) dated 30 November 2011, the record of activities carried out by UNFICYP pursuant to Security Council resolution 186 (1964) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution 2026 (2011).

2. As at 15 June, the strength of the military component stood at 858 for all ranks and the strength of the police component stood at 68 (see annex).

II. Mission of good offices

3. Since late January 2012, when another round of high-level talks was held at the Greentree Estate in New York, intensive bilateral meetings with each side have taken place focusing on property, territory and governance, and power-sharing. Despite evident commonalities in positions on property, no convergences were reached. In the area of governance and power-sharing, significant differences between the sides persisted on the issue of the election of the executive. At the end of March, my Special Adviser provided an assessment of progress in the talks and I met with him in mid-April to discuss the way forward. I concluded that there had not yet been sufficient progress on core issues to call a multilateral conference and informed both leaders of that conclusion. Both Demetris Christofias and Derviş Eroğlu indicated that they were willing to continue to strive for a solution. However, on 26 April, during a visit by my Special Adviser, the Turkish Cypriot side indicated that they would only continue with discussions on matters of substance if there was a binding time frame culminating in a multilateral conference. At the same time, the Greek Cypriot side expressed its readiness to continue discussions but rejected the notion of any binding timelines, and said it would only agree to a multilateral conference once all internal issues have been resolved. On 14 May, Mr. Christofias officially announced that he would not seek re-election to the presidency of Cyprus in 2013, citing lack of progress in the negotiations as a key factor in his decision.

4. Until the sides reach an agreement on how to proceed with the substantive negotiations, the focus will be on continuing the work of the technical committees.

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The sides have committed to reinvigorating the committees, established in 2008 during the preparatory phase of the talks with the objective of "improving the daily lives of Cypriots". The committees cover areas such as crime and criminal matters, economic and commercial matters, cultural heritage, crisis management, humanitarian matters, health and the environment. Consideration is also being given to reviving the committees on the opening of new crossings and broadcasting and to formulating proposals on additional technical committees and other possible confidence-building measures.

III. Activities of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

5. UNFICYP aims first and foremost to prevent a recurrence of fighting and contribute to the maintenance of law and order and a return to normal conditions. Its mandate requires reconciling, as far as possible, security considerations and the maintenance of the military status quo while allowing Cypriots who live and work in the buffer zone to pursue civilian activities and enjoy full and productive lives. Such an approach, when successful, builds confidence between the communities and contributes to the overall United Nations effort in support of the peace process.

A. Prevention of a recurrence of fighting and the maintenance of the military status quo

6. During the reporting period, UNFICYP continued to maintain the integrity and stability of the buffer zone. The downward trend of military violations committed by the two opposing forces has continued. Cooperation between UNFICYP and the opposing forces continued to be characterized by goodwill and mutual respect that enabled a positive relationship with the respective chains of command.

7. The opposing forces did not carry out any major exercises during the reporting period. At the same time, the active daily interventions of UNFICYP through observation, reporting and liaison remained important in preventing low-level activities that might provoke reactions from either side. Such activities occurred mostly in areas around Nicosia, where the opposing forces are deployed in close proximity to each other, and are predominantly related to ill discipline. The Mission continued to engage the opposing forces with regard to military confidence-building measures, such as the unmanning and/or closing of observation posts in such areas.

8. At the same time, challenges to the authority of UNFICYP posed by civilian activities continued to persist, now accounting for the majority of incidents across the buffer zone. In particular, unauthorized farming on contested land and hunting close to the ceasefire lines of the opposing forces and United Nations patrols continued to cause tensions in the buffer zone. UNFICYP has worked closely with the authorities on both sides to resolve such issues.

9. Previously reported military positions established by both opposing forces in the Dherinia area that violate the status quo remained in place. The Turkish forces retained the checkpoint in the Louroujina pocket. They also conducted regular inspections of the liaison post at Strovilia and repeatedly overmanned the position,

in violation of the military status quo. The United Nations holds the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo in Varosha.

10. Tensions related to exploration for natural resources within the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus continued during the reporting period. In February, following the confirmation of significant natural gas reserves off the southern coast of the island, Cyprus launched an international tender for offshore hydrocarbon exploration, in which a number of international companies have since expressed an interest. In response, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey issued two statements, considering such actions to prejudge the rights of the Turkish Cypriot community and claiming that some of the areas to be involved in exploration overlapped with its own continental shelf. The matter has also been publicly protested by the Turkish Cypriot side.

B. Demining

11. During the reporting period, the sides continued to withhold access to the four remaining mined areas in the buffer zone for the purposes of demining, namely, one located south of Varosha under the control of the Turkish Forces and three in the Louroujina pocket under the control of the National Guard. No agreement has been reached to extend demining to areas outside the buffer zone, as called for by the Security Council. As a consequence, the mine clearance operation remained suspended.

12. On 4 April, in observance of the International Day for Mine Awareness, UNFICYP and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with support from the United Nations Mine Action Service and the European Commission, inaugurated a panel exhibit at the Home for Cooperation in the downtown Nicosia buffer zone. The event featured a UNDP-produced video clip and brochure highlighting the continued threat of mines in Cyprus and received wide media coverage on both sides of the island.

13. In late May, under the observation of UNFICYP, the National Guard started to remove anti-personnel mines from one of its mined areas in the buffer zone, with a view to complying with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. At the same time, the National Guard decided to not remove its anti-tank mines.

C. Restoration of normal conditions and humanitarian functions

14. The buffer zone continued to see a steady increase in the number of civilian projects proposed by members of both communities and approved by UNFICYP, including farming, housing construction and commercial ventures, as well as "green" initiatives, such as organic farming and solar energy projects. In order to support such activities, including enabling greater access to agricultural land, UNFICYP routinely facilitated the provision of basic services and the maintenance of essential infrastructure in the buffer zone, such as roads, waterways and electricity supply. Both communities demonstrated a willingness to cooperate on such issues at the technical level.

15. UNFICYP in principle supports civilian projects in the buffer zone in line with its mandate to contribute to a return to normal conditions. During the reporting period, the Mission authorized 34 civilian projects out of 41 applications received. However, the Mission is firmly opposed to unauthorized civilian activities, including construction, which may give rise to an increase in tension in the buffer zone. The Mission has urged the relevant authorities on both sides to provide their fullest support in ensuring that individuals and organizations abide by the UNFICYP permit system and that the courts take prompt action on outstanding cases of assault on UNFICYP personnel and damage to United Nations property.

16. The unauthorized construction adjacent to the village of Pyla of a university campus was of particular concern during the reporting period. As Pyla is the only mixed village in the buffer zone, UNFICYP has long maintained efforts to build trust and confidence between the two communities, including overseeing unique security arrangements. However, the projected influx of up to 2,000 Cypriot and foreign students, which could double the current population of Pyla, has raised concerns with regard to security, and law and order. Neither side maintains a full-time police presence in Pyla, where UNFICYP is the first point of contact for both communities on law and order issues. Discussions between UNFICYP and the interested parties continue towards determining the arrangements required for the campus to be allowed to open.

17. Beyond the management of the buffer zone, UNFICYP continued to deliver weekly humanitarian assistance to 347 Greek Cypriots and 126 Maronites in the north, and to facilitate solutions for their long-term medical and health-care needs, which remain a challenge despite the Mission's continued engagement on the matter. UNFICYP continued to monitor the welfare of Turkish Cypriots in the south, including with regard to access to places of worship, such as the Hala Sultan Tekke mosque near Larnaca. There were no new developments regarding the establishment of a Turkish language primary school in Limassol. UNFICYP did not receive an answer from the Turkish Cypriot authorities on the request submitted by nine Maronite families and two Greek Cypriots for permanent residence in their traditional villages in the north.

18. UNFICYP assisted in addressing the legal and humanitarian issues in connection with the imprisonment of seven Turkish Cypriots in the south and one Maronite in the north and the temporary detentions of individuals on both sides. The Mission conducted visits to detention facilities to ascertain the conditions and welfare of the individuals serving sentences in the other community. It also facilitated visits by family members and access to legal representation and interpretation and was present during court hearings to ensure confidence in the judicial proceedings in the other community.

19. UNFICYP continued to support civil society initiatives aimed at fostering *bicommunal* cooperation. During the reporting period, the Mission facilitated 93 bicommunal events, with the participation of more than 3,000 people, in cooperation with international and local partners. Regular meetings were held between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political party leaders and representatives under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia at the Ledra Palace Hotel. Other events included sporting gatherings, cultural festivals, educational events on water saving and environmental awareness and meetings on specific issues of concerns at the level of local community leaders. During the reporting

period, UNFICYP facilitated 11 religious and commemorative events, involving approximately 1,850 people, which were held in or required the crossing of the buffer zone.

20. UNFICYP lent its support to a variety of bicommunal projects in the buffer zone implemented by UNDP and its local partners, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development and the European Union. In March, the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, a bicommunal civil society organization whose office is located in the buffer zone between the Ledra Palace Hotel crossing points, published educational materials intended to foster a multi-perspective approach to teaching the island's history in schools in both communities. UNDP also supported the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage for the renovation of cultural heritage sites on both sides of the island. Collaboration between UNFICYP and UNDP also continued on the stabilization of the buildings at the Ledra Street/Lokmaçı crossing point.

21. During the reporting period, the role of UNFICYP police was instrumental in facilitating a number of investigations by the respective police services into criminal incidents that occurred within the buffer zone. The Joint Communications Room continued to facilitate the exchange of information and cooperation between the two sides on criminal matters, with a total of 43 requests for information and 27 responses exchanged. The sides are also discussing the establishment of a joint database on crime, which would be maintained in the Joint Communications Room.

22. The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters, facilitated by UNFICYP police, held five meetings during the reporting period. The Committee has agreed to a series of initiatives for the remainder of 2012, including a bicommunal festival aimed at sensitizing youth on both sides of the island to the dangers of drugs and alcohol abuse.

23. During the period from 22 October 2011 to 14 May 2012, UNFICYP recorded over 740,000 official crossings through the buffer zone, comparable to previous periods. From December to May 2012, goods worth approximately €1,255,576 crossed from the south to the north, up some 57 per cent from the previous reporting period. Goods moving in the opposite direction amounted to €8,857,448, which remained higher than usual due to the provision of electricity to help cover shortfalls in the south.

24. The overall assessment of the functioning of the crossings has been positive. Nonetheless, during the reporting period there were a number of instances of restrictions on crossings by Turkish Cypriots and foreign tourists from the north to the south, which the Turkish Cypriot side claimed to be harming its economy, and on crossings of people in the opposite direction. However, those instances were few and did not appear to reflect a deliberate policy.

25. The Committee on Crossings, which was tasked by the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders in December 2010 to reach an agreement on new crossing points, did not meet during the reporting period. Despite the engagement by UNFICYP with the sides, their positions on the locations of new crossings remained irreconcilable.

26. UNFICYP police continued to provide escorts for convoys of Turkish Cypriot civilians and humanitarian supplies through the buffer zone to Kokkina/Erenköy, as agreed by the two leaders in October 2010. While civilian traffic at the crossing

remained unaffected, there were a number of requests by the Turkish Cypriot side for formal escorts over and above the agreed frequency, to as many as six in one week, sometimes twice daily.

27. Beginning in late 2011, a group of protesters had occupied the Ledra Street/Lokmaçı crossing in downtown Nicosia. While the protest waxed and waned during the reporting period, the encampment posed a security risk and a safety and public health hazard. UNFICYP closely monitored the situation and liaised with the sides to ensure that the presence of protesters did not undermine the security situation or the smooth functioning of the crossing point. In June, the departure of the last protesters allowed the area to be restored to normality.

28. Occasional restrictions on United Nations staff members of Greek Cypriot origin seeking to undertake their duties in the north remained in place.

IV. Committee on Missing Persons

29. During the reporting period, the Committee on Missing Persons continued to carry forward its bicommunal project on the exhumation, identification and return of the remains of missing persons. As at June 2012, the Committee's bicommunal teams of archaeologists had exhumed the remains of over 850 individuals on both sides of the island. The remains of over 700 missing persons had undergone examination at the Committee's bicommunal anthropological laboratory in the United Nations Protected Area in Nicosia. Following genetic analysis of some 1,500 samples, the remains of over 320 individuals have been returned to their respective families to date, including 21 during the reporting period. The Committee is committed to keeping its genetic analysis at the highest level of international best practices. For that purpose, it is in the process of finalizing a contract for DNA analysis with the genetic laboratory of the International Commission on Missing Persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the reporting period, the Committee's access to military areas in the north continued to be circumscribed.

V. Financial and administrative aspects

30. As indicated in the previous report, the General Assembly, by its resolution 65/295, appropriated the amount of $56.5 million gross for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012, inclusive of the voluntary contribution of one third of the net cost of the Force, equivalent to $18.0 million, from the Government of Cyprus and the voluntary contribution of $6.5 million from the Government of Greece. I invite other countries and organizations to do likewise, with a view to reducing the portion of the cost of UNFICYP covered by assessed contributions.

31. The Fifth Committee, during the second part of the resumed sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, approved the budget in the amount of $54.6 million gross for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013, for which the Assembly is yet to take a decision.

32. Should the Council decide to extend the mandate of UNFICYP for a further period of six months, as recommended in paragraph 42 below, the cost of maintaining the Force would be limited to the amount approved by the General Assembly.

33. As at 12 June 2012, the total outstanding assessed contributions to the special account for UNFICYP for the period from 16 June 1993 to 8 June 2012 amounted to $15.8 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at the same date amounted to $1.36 billion.

34. Reimbursement of troop and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made only for the periods up to 29 February 2012 and 1 June 2010, respectively, owing to the delay in the receipt of assessed contributions.

VI. Observations

35. The continued decrease in the overall number of military violations is welcome. The opposing forces should build on that positive trend and engage with UNFICYP on military confidence-building measures. It is also essential that the authority of UNFICYP be respected by the local population and authorities. Civilian activities in the buffer zone are a natural consequence of an increased sense of overall security. Such activities, however, will only contribute to the reconciliation process if they are managed in a manner that fosters trust and cooperation. I therefore call upon the respective authorities to provide their fullest support to UNFICYP in implementing its mandate.

36. The ongoing tensions and rhetoric around Cyprus related to the exploitation of natural resources are of concern. In that context, I call upon all parties to make every effort to avoid raising tensions, which may have a negative impact on the security situation on or around the island, including in the buffer zone. It is important to ensure that any newfound wealth from natural resources, which belong to all Cypriots, will benefit both communities. Such development constitutes another strong incentive to finding a durable solution to the Cyprus problem, and it is my hope that it may engender a deeper cooperation for the benefit of all stakeholders in the region.

37. Restrictions on the movement of locally employed United Nations personnel regrettably continue. Freedom of movement for all United Nations personnel is a matter of principle for the Organization and an operational requirement for UNFICYP. I call upon the Turkish Cypriot authorities to respect that principle.

38. I remain of the view that the establishment of economic, social, cultural, sporting or similar ties and contacts will have a positive impact on the negotiations. Such contacts nurture a sentiment of trust between the communities and help address the concerns of isolation expressed by the Turkish Cypriots. Furthermore, greater economic and social parity between the sides will make an eventual reunification not only easier but also more likely. In the context of an internationally sanctioned peace process, efforts in the opposite direction can only be counterproductive.

39. The United Nations is pleased to continue its support to the critical work on behalf of the families of victims, through its support of the Committee on Missing Persons. Given the current challenges facing the Committee, I count on the support of all parties to preserve the non-political and bicommunal character of the work of the Committee and to allow it to discharge its mandate in compliance with international standards. I furthermore urge all parties, once again, to ensure that the Committee is able to meet its exhumation requirements throughout the island, by providing unrestricted access, including in military-controlled areas in the north.

40. While a partial clearance by the National Guard of one mined area in the buffer zone is under way, mine fields, both in and outside the buffer zone, remain on the island. I call upon the parties to facilitate, without delay, access to the remaining mined areas in and outside the buffer zone, in line with Security Council resolution 2026 (2011). The United Nations stands ready to assist the parties in their aspiration to achieve a mine-free Cyprus.

41. As I reported over a year ago regarding new crossings, the two sides were positively disposed to a crossing south of Apliki/Aplıç in the Lefka/Lefke area. At that time, I called upon the parties to take a pragmatic and results-oriented approach, with a view to enabling further social and economic interaction between the two communities. I am disappointed that, despite the stated readiness by the parties to open more crossings, no progress has since been achieved.

42. UNFICYP continues to play an important role on the island by maintaining the buffer zone and contributing to the calm and resolution of various issues affecting the everyday lives of both communities. It performs its activities in close collaboration with my mission of good offices, led by my Special Adviser, and other United Nations actors on the island. I recommend that the mandate of UNFICYP be extended for a period of six months, until 19 January 2013.

43. As mentioned above, a stage in the negotiation process has once again been reached where it is incumbent on the sides to agree to and proceed with a way forward for the talks. In that regard, I would encourage both sides to work closely with my Special Adviser and his team, who remain at their disposal. I furthermore continue to encourage political leaders in Cyprus to fully embrace the concept and practice of a more inclusive dialogue which ensures that civil society actors can have a meaningful role in the peace process.

44. In line with relevant Security Council resolutions, most recently resolution 2026 (2011), the Secretariat will remain engaged in contingency planning in relation to the settlement. The planning will continue to be guided by developments in the negotiations and the views of the parties on the possible role of the United Nations in that respect.

45. At the same time, I shall continually keep the operations of UNFICYP under close review, taking into account developments on the ground and the views of the parties, and shall revert to the Council with recommendations, as appropriate, for further adjustments to the UNFICYP mandate, force levels and concept of operations as soon as warranted. As I informed the Council in my report dated 30 November 2011 (S/2011/746) regarding the broader assessment of the United Nations presence in Cyprus, internal discussions continue as to the potential scope and timing of such an exercise.

46. In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to my Special Representative and Chief of Mission, Ms. Lisa M. Buttenheim, to the Force Commander, Major General Chao Liu, and to the men and women serving in UNFICYP for the efficiency and commitment with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council. I also express my gratitude to my Special Adviser, Alexander Downer, and the good offices team.

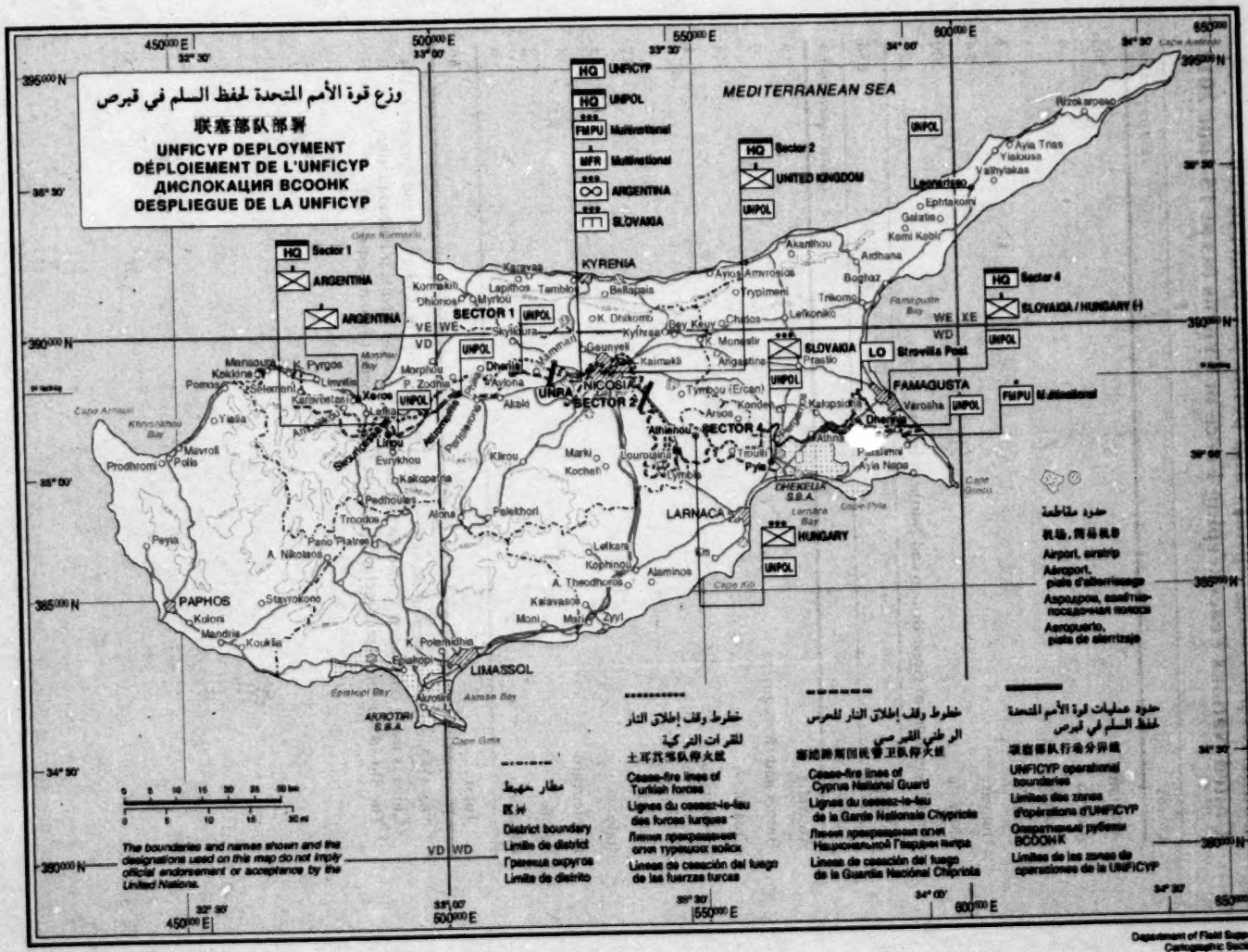
Annex

Countries providing military and police personnel to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (as at 15 June 2012)

Country	*Military personnel*
Argentina[a]	295
Austria	4
Canada	1
China[b]	2
Hungary	84
Slovakia[c]	200
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	272
Total	**858**

Country	*United Nations police*
Australia	15
Bosnia and Herzegovina	9
Croatia	4
El Salvador	1
India	6
Ireland	17
Italy	4
Montenegro	4
Serbia	2
Ukraine	6
Total	**68**

[a] The Argentinean contingent includes soldiers from Brazil (1), Chile (15) and Paraguay (14).
[b] China is using one vacant Canadian and one British post at UNFICYP headquarters.
[c] The Slovakian contingent includes soldiers from Croatia (2) and Serbia (46).



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